

Senate Bill 516 Cannabis Reform Senate Finance Committee, Senate Budget & Tax Committee
March 9, 2023

Information:

My name is Crystal Thomas and I am writing this testimony to tell you how cannabis has affected my life and my son's life.

I will start with myself. I started smoking cannabis at 15 years old. I smoked every day for from 15 years to 32 years old. I always smoked flower marijuana and never had any issues. It wasn't until my last few years of smoking, that I started to smoke the concentrated THC cartridges, which are a lot more stronger. Whether it be from the flower or the cartridges, it has affected my breathing severely and has put me into the early stages of COPD.

Cannabis has also stunted my emotional maturity and numbed my emotions as well. Marijuana was also a gateway drug for me. Over time the marijuana stops working and you go to others things to seek a high. Cannabis has affected my emotional and physical health. My breathing got worse and I was constantly getting bronchitis. Also, no other form of cannabis would get me high after smoking cartridges, because of the difference in strength.

Marijuana has affected my 16 year old son as well. He started smoking at 12 years old unbeknownst to me. He started out smoking the cartridges off the bat. His smoking has greatly increased and it shows through his behavior and mood. He wants to stay high all day long, he has no motivation, always irritable, and very quick to anger. He has missed so much school in the past two and a half years, I have lost count of the number. When he does go to school, he barely goes to his classes, he's usually skipping in the bathroom getting high. He is failing every class but one and he doesn't even seem to care. He also smokes the concentrated dabs. I am terrified of what it is doing to his lungs, body and especially his brain.

From my personal experience, I feel we are not doing enough to protect people and to bring more awareness. My biggest concern is the public health impact cannabis has on our youth in the present and the future. There have been many studies done that have linked marijuana and bad mental health outcomes and I am living proof of that.

So I've come to you all today to not only share my personal experience, but to also ask for more public health measures for cannabis. I propose to have very clear health warnings on packaging, and as well as labeling for THC content. I also propose not having people from the industry on the cannabis advisory board, and better training for people who work in the industry.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story, I greatly appreciate it.

Crystal Thomas
Glen Burnie, MD
crystal22107@yahoo.com